(c) and (d) The scheme of VRS/VSS now proposed improves upon the existing arrangement having due regard to the views expressed.

(e) The details are being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Privatisation of Salem Steel Plant

*335. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY : Will the MINISTER OF STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to privatise Salem Steel Plant;

(b) whether it could not be revived by waiving interest amount; and

(c) whether aspirations and interests of the workers and the people of Tamil Nadu have been taken into account while deciding to privatise it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) and (c) The financial and business restructuring package for Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) that has been approved by the Government includes, inter alia, conversion of Salem Steel Plant (SSP) into a joint venture, while protecting the jobs of existing employees.

(b) SSP has incurred a loss of Rs. 180 crores during 1998-99 and Rs. 122 crores during April—December, 1999. The interest burden was Rs. 123 crores during 1998-99 and Rs. 80 crores during April—December, 1999. As such even without consideration of interest, SSP has been incurring losses. Waiver of interest amount alone will not lead to revival of Salem Steel Plant.

Unemployment Problem in Urban Areas

*336. DR. M.N. DAS : Will the MINISTER OF URBAN EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the ever-growing problem of unemployment among the educated youth in urban areas;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to create job opportunities for the educated unemployed; and

(c) if so, what kind of employment prospects are being thought of ?